United Nations E/AC.51/2015/L.4/Add.6

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
18 June 2015

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-fifth session
1-26 June 2015
Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-fifth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Joseph Marie **Fouda Ndi** (Cameroon)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(*Item 3 (b)*)

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

1. At its 10th meeting, on 8 June 2015, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (E/AC.51/2015/9).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report. The Assistant Secretary-General/Deputy Executive Director, Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau, of UN-Women and the Director of the Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the report and highlighted the timeliness of the evaluation in view of the continuing debate on the post-2015 development agenda and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Delegations expressed the view that UN-Women should increasingly build on best practices and lessons learned and noted the success of the Entity in normative matters globally. Note was taken of the progress achieved in various areas, including in relation to the Commission on the

15-10040 (E) 220615

Please recycle

Status of Women and other intergovernmental processes, as well as sustainable development, indigenous peoples, climate change and natural disasters. In addition, clarification was requested as to whether the eight areas of work of UN-Women were delivering at the same level or whether some areas were performing better than others.

4. Delegations noted the positive collaboration between UN-Women and OIOS during the evaluation. Some sought clarification on the methodology employed, including possible reasons for the low response rates to web-based surveys and interviews with Member States, civil society organizations and UN-Women staff, including the Entity's Executive Board and resident coordinators, and the use of an expert consultant as part of the evaluation team.

5. Delegations stressed the importance of the work of UN-Women for gender equality and the empowerment of women and reiterated strong support for the Entity and its mandate. Delegations commended UN-Women on the significant progress achieved since its creation in 2011, with one seeking further details on how the Entity had taken stock of and built on the work performed in the field before its inception. Note was taken of the challenges in implementing such a global agenda given the existing resource constraints. The Entity's overreliance on voluntary contributions was highlighted. One delegation questioned the reduction in the share of regular budget resources for 2016-2017. Delegations expressed appreciation for the fact that, the shortage of resources compared with estimates at the inception of the Entity notwithstanding, UN-Women had been able to raise awareness of gender issues and contribute to the development of norms and standards for gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide.

6. Delegations took note of the progress made by UN-Women in the coordination of efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within entities of the United Nations system and with partners, underlining existing challenges within the organization. One suggested that key factors and best practices in that regard should be identified as lessons learned.

7. Several delegations noted that no country had yet achieved gender equality and that additional efforts were required to overcome cultural resistance and gain political will for the empowerment of women. They expressed support for the advocacy role that UN-Women could play to further foster the implementation of gender strategies and policies at the country level, while noting that limited resources had severely affected the Entity's capacity to deliver on its mandate. The importance of partnerships and synergies with civil society organizations and United Nations country teams was underlined. One delegation stressed that UN-Women had not made full use of existing coordination mechanisms for the implementation of normative frameworks.

8. Some delegations expressed concern regarding the use in the report of the term "cultural resistance" and other new terms that had not been agreed upon in relevant intergovernmental processes. They stressed that OIOS should use the terminology that Member States had previously agreed upon by consensus within the context of those processes.

9. One delegation sought further clarification as to why OIOS had not assessed existing partnerships between UN-Women and civil society organizations, which were considered very important for the Entity in overcoming challenges and

resistance at the local and national levels to the implementation of its activities. Another delegation further underlined the importance of linkages to intergovernmental bodies such as the Council of Europe and questioned the lack of such linkages with the European Union, where gender was an essential cross-cutting area and where the European Court of Justice applied case law on issues of equality and efforts to combat discrimination.

10. One delegation stressed the essential contribution of women to peace and security and underlined that the results presented in the report were not satisfying, especially in relation to women from African countries. In that regard, another delegation stressed that the lack of a UN-Women presence in some countries, such as the Central African Republic, or regions, such as West Africa, affected the Entity's effectiveness in delivering on its mandate. A third delegation underlined the importance of supporting the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in that regard.

11. Several delegations requested clarification on the steps that UN-Women had taken to mainstream gender perspectives in the work of other partners and how the Entity intended to reach its target audience in areas in which it was not present in the field and in which access to social media was limited. One welcomed the use of radio programmes in areas in which access to modern technology was limited. In that regard, another delegation noted that, those challenges notwithstanding, the figures cited in the report indicated that the impact of UN-Women in the field had increased.

12. Delegations welcomed the positive response of UN-Women to the recommendations of OIOS and sought further details on the implementation process, in particular given the budgetary constraints. One stressed the importance of recommendations 2 to 4 and sought further details on their integration into the UN-Women strategic plans for the periods 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 and the budgetary consequences thereof.

13. One delegation said that stronger indicators of achievement were necessary to improve the performance of UN-Women and to foster lasting results.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly should endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 64 to 67 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of UN-Women.**

15. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly should encourage UN-Women to use system-wide coordination mechanisms to their fullest potential for promoting the implementation of its mandates to strengthen the linkages between its normative and its operational work and, subject to requests by Member States, to enhance its presence at the country level.**

16. **Regarding recommendation 3, the Committee stressed the need to improve the implementation of the mandates of UN-Women at the regional and country levels through the implementation of approved strategies and organizational solutions that enhanced mutual cooperation between headquarters and field offices.**

17. The Committee underlined that it was important for UN-Women to provide technical advice and support to the United Nations system on mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in its work. The strength of those partnerships was considered an important contribution to ensuring the coherent implementation of its mandate within the United Nations system.

18. The Committee noted with concern the finding of OIOS that gender focal points participating in the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality were often at an insufficiently high level of authority to make decisions and commitments. In that regard, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should bring to the attention of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the need to encourage the executive heads of the agencies, funds and programmes to ensure that the organizational placement and level of authority of gender focal points were sufficient to support the decision-making process effectively.